Then the Shibukombe (emissary) is invited, whose job it is to uncover 584
the covered baskets. In payment for his work he may take all the
small presents placed on top of the food /no tuntu toonse tulya
bashikwile pa bwali, fyakwe/.

Period Between the Engagement and Nubility: /kukûba/. During the 583
period preceeding nubility the fiancée often goes to her fiancé's hut
in order to do small chores, such as sweeping, lighting the fire, draw-
ing water or whitewashing the house. These chores are supposed to
reveal to the fiancé the devotion and skill of his future wife
/kuchichila/. Furthermore, she will live in her fiancé's house for
a considerable time in order to show that she is docile /kupetama/.

When his fiancée is on the eve of menstruation, the fiancé
goes to live with his father-in-law /shifyala/. He does several favors
for him. As a token of respect, the food which is offered him is al- [576]
ways covered by a basket. His bwali will be offered him uncovered
only on the day when the Shibukombe is invited to uncover the wed-
ding bwali, before which the latter will pour water for him to wash
his hands /kusambikisha/, and after having whitened the spot where
the fiancé washed his hands (nsoni shapwa) with clayey soil
(kushingula).

Chisungu (Menstruation). In the forest. When the fiancée has her 881
first period, /kuwa chisungu/, she runs to hide in the forest. After
finding her, her kinswomen collect around her in order to make cer-
tain of the fact /bamukunsha/. They then break small branches from
the trees, and while dancing they sing as follows: "We have gone to
tell the little spotted lion-cub that his master has come" /Twaire
sobera nkalamo ya mabala chibinda taluba/. They then go to the
fiancé's house, and place their branches on the roof saying: "Nshimba,
nshimba" (wild cat). From this moment on, the fiancé takes the name
of shichisungu, and the fiancée, nachisungu.

At home. Then the women go to find the nachisungu (the
nubile fiancée) in the forest, and after having submitted her to vari-
ous /213/ tests, such as jumping across a bundle of fire-wood or drink-
ing water from a jug which contains small tadpoles, they carry her
back to her home on their shoulders. The fiancée's father leaves his
hut and goes to stay elsewhere. Henceforth there will be the mako [784]

taboo between him and his daughter. The nubile fiancée then lives with her mother in complete seclusion for an entire month. This is the kuingisha chisungu, literally, to make certain of the marriage-ability. The girl's mother ceases to wash and bathe herself [kuoa]; the girl stops shaving her hair [kubea].

The Menstruation Dance. [Kuimba chisungu]. This phase is also called the kufumie chisungu, which means in honor of the nubile maiden. Ordinarily this ceremony takes place in June or July, when the "eleusin" [Translator's note: raggee, a cereal grass] is ripe. This is a time of plenty and beer. The kinswomen of the young girl invite the nachimbusa (the female director of this ceremony). As a token of the invitation, they give her a present [lusomo], such as a chicken, for example.

From the moment when dancing in honor of the nubile girl begins, all sweeping of the hut must cease, and only the throwing of ashes [mito] into the mupunda (space between the door and the hall on the left of the entrance) may take place. The women then go to fetch the nakalamba, whose task it is to invite the other women to come and dance, sing and beat the drum. She is not shaved and must be white with dust [abuta tutu]. These are the words she uses for the invitation: "Companions, help me in my task" [Bamayo, ngafweni ko mulimo]. All the women assemble in the hut. The director [nachimbusa] is the one who gives the sign for the singing to begin. Everyone falls in with the refrain by beating the drum or dancing. The nachimbusa, who also dances, is clothed in a genet skin and wears a tuft of feathers as head-gear. She sings: "Chimbusa chikulu chienda ne ngala" (I am the director who walks with her head covered by a tuft of feathers). The dance begins at about sundown and ends towards dawn. The songs for this dance are extremely varied, some innocent and praising, others equivocal and often obscene. They dance like this for an entire month. Food is brought in daily in order to give strength to those who are dancing.

The Beer. After the month of "menstruation dancing" is over, the local beer is prepared in large quantities. It is offered to the fiancé's mother. Early in the morning after the night when the beer was prepared, the [214] women flock to the fiancée's house for the mbusa. They split into two groups; while some go to fetch white clay (mpemba) others gather fire-wood (nkuni).

companion, thou art beautiful, thou art elegant.) The women then make her sit down on a mat in the middle of the courtyard. The fiancé presents his gifts. He is accompanied by friends and relatives. At the end of the ceremony the fiancée is brought back home. Then the nachimbusa is given great quantities of food in payment of her work [imali]. Moreover, the nachimbusa takes all the filundu off the fiancée and appropriates them, except for what she gives to the nakalamba. Henceforth the fiancée remains alone with her mother. Her fiancé gives her two other filundu. Thus ends the chisungu ceremony. 851

WEDDING. Mpango (wedding presents). For the wedding proper other gifts are prepared. For this purpose, the shibukombe is again invited. The fiancé's father says to him: "Take these presents and give them to the fiancée's parents." The shibukombe carries out the order. The fiancée's father says: "It is agreed from now on my daughter may be his wife." Beer, bwali and chickens are then carried in. When everything is ready [pekanya], the father-in-law says to the shibukombe "Tell my son-in-law to tell his mother about it." In the evening, the fiancée's paternal aunt [nasenge] is invited to the house. 585

At the fiancé's. In the evening, the nasenge goes to fetch the fiancée, her niece, and carrying her on her back [amupapa], she brings her into the fiancé's hut. When she has brought her inside, she tells her: "Kakula mushingo," etc. Whereupon she goes outside but stays near the hut.

Instructions. Immediately the fiancé goes out to receive instructions from the elders. After this instruction, the husband is given two ivory ornaments with which he is to rub his body all night long. The spouses must not scrape their nails with tupande tubili, for this would cause the nails to grow out of proportion and fall out [koboloka] as well as to make the entire body rot [ondoloka]. They also have been admonished not to blow on the fire in order to fan the flame, as this would cause them to waste away. Someone else must light and maintain the fire during this night. 585 784

Actus matrimonialis. The fiancé returns to this hut, where he is awaited [219] by the fiancée and ubi faciunt actus conjugalis (where the marriage is consumated.) If they succeed, they throw burning firewood outside. All the witnesses waiting in the courtyard utter 585

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third kept in the owner's hut for his near family or special friends. But in each case, after the formal drinking has begun, the original guests are joined by others who enter with a polite salutation, take a short pull at the beer, and stay for a short talk. When there is only one calabash to be divided in the village, each inhabitant will probably join the crowd in the hut at one time or another in the evening. Thus there is a constant coming and going of men and women, and the children who are too small to be left at home. Dancing nearly always accompanies the drinking. In these circumstances it is not surprising that there should be the maximum amount of excitement with the minimum of alcohol consumed. Old women usually drink with the men. It is considered bad form for young girls to do so, and women nursing small children are afraid to join in for fear that the baby might be harmed by contact with a hearth touched by some one ritually impure during the confusion of the evening's drink. Where there is enough beer therefore the women have a calabash of their own.

The guests come together in a condition of pleasurable anticipation. They crowd into a hut about eight feet in diameter and sit huddled on the floor side by side in the closest possible physical contact. The heat is terrific, as the fire is piled high to keep the water boiling and to give light to the company. Sweat pours down naked shoulders. Sometimes singing begins, and the whole company rock to and fro clapping their hands, or they may be wedged still tighter against the wall, and a space cleared for a solo dancer and a couple of big drums. The watchers sway, tap with their feet, and clap the rhythm. At other times the drums stand outside in the village square, and young men and women stream out of the hut to line up for the big round dance—*icila*, or the line dance—the *ngoosi*. In these conditions the excitement of social intercourse is probably at least as potent as the influence of alcohol.[1] Real drunkenness, in the form in which we know it, is more often to be found in the modern villages where a man can 'drink alone', or with a few friends and when dancing does not accompany the drinking.

It is difficult to estimate the quantity of beer drunk by the Bemba during a year or an average night. In the harvest months—May to

[1] A compound-manager at Wankie Mine told me that he had found the same amount of intoxication produced among the mine employees at a Christmas beer-drink with an alcohol content of about half that which was usual. He explained it by saying, 'I think they had been expecting to get drunk at Christmas for so long.'

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magicians already described. Both are known as *ifibinda*. But naturally these specialist hunters are not common nowadays, since game restrictions prevent the killing of elephants—formerly their chief pursuit.

Every form of hunting has magic rites connected with it. Each hunter or setter of traps has his own charms (*ubwanga*) designed to make himself invisible, to draw the game to him, to slow its power of movement, &c. The animals themselves are thought to have magic attributes. Parts of their skin or bones are used as activating principles (*ifishimbi*) in many charms or medicines, and many of them can only be hunted or killed after special ritual precautions have been taken to protect the hunter. All animals that attack or kill mankind are grouped in a special class known as *ifiswanga* (sing. *iciswanga*). These include the lion, leopard, cheetah, crocodile, hyena, or poisonous snakes, &c., and all these species are considered to have magic properties and to require ritual handling. Other animals are described as being *ifibanda* (sing. *icibanda*) or haunting spirits, or else are thought to turn into *ifibanda* when killed, and they are feared on that account. The bush-pig, bush-buck, hippo, rhino, eland and ant-bear are all *ifibanda*. Akin are the unlucky animals, e.g. those with the bottom teeth projecting or appearing first (*icisukulu*, plur. *ifisukulu*)[1] such as the zebra, the eland, haartebeest, or buffalo, which have no upper teeth in the middle of the jaw; the night owl (*ntiti mushi*) or the wild cat. None of these animals may be taken as tribute to a chief or eaten by a pregnant woman.

After killing one of the *ifiswanga* or *ifibanda*, the hunter must purify himself for fear the spirit of the animal will pursue him in dreams, bring him ill luck, or send him mad. This is also true of the elephant. The purification of a lion killer takes place at the chief's court and hereditary officials, the *Bamushika* (Kasenge and Cikutwe at Citimukulu's court), alone have the medicine required to wash the hunter.[2] But less elaborate rites are performed in the case of the leopard, crocodile, the caracal, and a bull eland with thick black tufts on its head. The ceremonies necessary after the killing of an elephant are described below.

[1] Children whose bottom teeth come through first are considered unlucky and are put to death.

[2] The *malaila* or war-song is also sung. I am indebted to Mr. T. Fox-Pitt and Mr. V. Brelaford for much confirmatory information on the magic properties of different animals.

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usually descendants of the dead chief, and directly responsible to his living successor.

(4) *Natural phenomena* (*ngula*). Remarkable natural phenomena like big waterfalls or caves are also considered to be spirit-centres believed to have been inhabited by legendary personages, e.g. the cave under the Cishimba Waterfall near Cilubula, the Canga cave filled with bats near Kasama, a queer pointed stone in the river near Kapatu, warm springs at Mwamba Kambwale in Munkonge's country where women only may catch the fish, &c. Many of these sites are also associated with a form of snake worship, or are believed to be inhabited by a python. Battle-grounds or places where many people have been known to be killed, are also feared and believed to be haunted by spirits (e.g. Musonda Cinanda in the Chinsali district where a number of Arabs are said to have been slaughtered). All these *ngulu* sites are in charge of local *bashimapepo* acting under the orders of the chief.

(5) *Burial groves of dead chiefs* (*mwalule*). It is characteristic of the centralized government of the Bemba that their big chiefs are buried in one place—Shimwalule in the Chinsali district—while the lesser chiefs and chieftainesses are buried in the grove of Bwalya Cabala near Citimukulu's village.[1] The great grove, a place kept with great secrecy and lying at about four days' walk from the capital, is said to have the greatest *imipashi* of the land. The priest in charge, the *Shimwalule*, is himself the burier of the Citimukulu, and is in a sense the ultimate authority in the whole spiritual hierarchy since he alone can sacrifice for rain,[2] or in the old days could pray for success in war.

(6) *Sacred relic shrines* (*babenye*). The Paramount Chief, all the bigger territorial chiefs, and the most important *bakabilo*, possess relic shrines which are considered the ultimate source of their spiritual powers. These shrines are huts which resemble ordinary houses, but have their doors barred with logs or ivory tusks, and are kept with the utmost secrecy. They are hedged with taboos, and may only be entered by the chief, the 'wives of the relics' (*bamukabenye*), old women, descendants of the first chief's wives, and by the five most important *bakabilo*. They contain relics (usually stools) of the first holders of each particular title, by which the tribal spirits may be invoked. The most important religious rites of the Bemba are those by which a new Paramount acquires his

[1] Cf. pp. 240–1.

[2] Drought is very rare in this area.

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789
[758] witchcraft, handled by people believed to have supernatural powers.

(ii) *The magic influence of sex, blood and fire* which, when brought 789 into wrongful contact with each other, are thought to be highly 831 dangerous to every Bemba, but particularly to babies and young 372 children, who are believed to be vulnerable to so many dangers; and to chiefs, on whom the prosperity of the land is held to depend. This system of beliefs is extremely complex, and yet it is necessary to try to understand it, if the meaning of the chisungu is to be grasped. The dogma relating sex and fire is the *idée maîtresse* behind most of the ritual behaviour of the Bemba.

834 Briefly speaking, sex relations according to Bemba dogma make
●784 a couple 'hot'. In this state it is dangerous for them to approach 783 the ancestral spirits in any rite of prayer or sacrifice; and any chief 622 or headman who attempted to perform such a ceremony without purification would run the risk of bringing disaster on his district.
[793] The chief's shrines are guarded by old women or hereditary priests who keep sex taboos. For the chief to be casual in keeping sex taboos, or to approach his ancestors without purification is 'to spoil the land' (*ukuonaula icalo*).

831 All persons of sex maturity are in fact distinguished by a special 372 term (*wa kuboko*) and are excluded from a number of rites on the 784 ground that they are 'hot', or are likely to be 'hot'. Such people 783 can pollute the fireplace of a hut by touching it, and then a baby 854 fed with gruel cooked on this fire might sicken and die. Parents 846 who do not purify themselves after intercourse run the risk of killing their children by accidentally touching the family hearth. Adulterers are more dangerous still, as they cannot purify themselves since the necessary rite can only be carried out by husband and wife. Small babies and their mothers are therefore kept away from beer drinks where 'bad' people congregate drinking round the fire without care. The baby's gruel is often cooked on a separate hearth and in a separate pot. The art of Bemba motherhood in fact consists very largely in guarding children from danger from fire. A newly born baby is 'unripe' (*mubishi*) and is in a specially precarious position until it has been 'taken' by its parents (*ukupoka umwana*) by an act of intercourse and the lighting of new fire, when it is a few months old. To save the baby, it must be 'brought to the fire' by being held over the flames of a doctored

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fire when it is first placed to the breast, or when the cord falls off (*ukumwalawila*). If its father is away and the ceremony of 'taking the child' cannot take place, the baby is given medicine (*umuti wa luzhya*). The mother and the midwife extinguish the old fire, mud the hut and light a new fire. Then they carry the baby to the men's shelter where there are presumably many youths 'with heat' or 'with bad things', or to a kitchen where the people have been known not to have done the purification ceremony. In this dangerous company, they give the baby gruel cooked on the new fire to make it immune. The rite of *ukumukokotola* is a ceremonial spitting of raw food on the baby by a menstruating woman so that the baby can be safely touched by a woman who is in this condition. All these methods are believed to secure immunity on homoeopathic principles.

The chief's sacred fire, the fire of the land, must be protected with even greater care. It is placed in a separate hut and watched by a senior wife, past child bearing. The chief's food is usually cooked by a man and not a woman.

To remove the dangers due to sex intercourse a special ceremony is required and this is one which can only be performed by a legally married couple. Hence the close links between the rules of ritual and those governing marriage ties, and the great importance of magic belief in determining the strength of the marital relationship. At marriage each girl is presented by her paternal aunt with a miniature pot about 2¼ inches in diameter which must be guarded with the utmost secrecy. With this the purification rite is carried out. It is filled with water and placed on the fire, man and wife each holding the rim. Water from the pot is then poured by the wife on to her husband's hands, and some say on to the wife's as well. New 'pure' fire is then relit either by means of fire-sticks, or, as is usual nowadays, with matches. This apparently simple rite is the essential act which removes the condition of hotness from the body of man and wife and renders them free to touch a hearth with impunity or to approach the ancestral spirits. Some say that it used to be performed after each sex act and others that it was merely done before some ceremony of special undertaking such as harvesting. It is still spoken of with the utmost secrecy and shyness and still survives even in the face of strong opposition from

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833 missionaries. In the ritual life of a chief the pot ceremony is of par-
783 ticular importance.[1]

581 The ritual links uniting a married couple are thus particularly strong in this society. It is husband and wife who perpetually carry out the dangerous act of sex together, who thereby put themselves in each other's power, and who depend on each other for the ceremonial purification which neither can carry out alone.[2] The marriage relationship is ritualized from the start.

372 On important ritual occasions, such as the 'warming' of a new
783 village site, the installation of a chief, a marriage, a death, or the protection rites for a young child, the old fire must be extinguished and a new fire lit with fire-sticks or matches, and the floor of the hut freshly mudded over. These are signs that the pollution is definitely removed. The fire is also harmed by objects or persons that are 'cold'. Contact with a dead body makes a fire cold, or
[841] contact with a menstruating woman, who is described in polite speech as 'being in a state of coldness' (*Akuba na mpepo*) or as 'fearing fire' (*atina umulilo*). People who eat food cooked on the fire by such women are liable to illness.

841 The most constant danger to the family fire is in fact the touch
372 of the housewife herself, when she is passing through her periods. Then she must be careful not to touch the family fire that her husband or her children use. She has her own small fire separate from the main fire, and if it goes out, she can only borrow from a woman past child-bearing or a girl who has not reached puberty.
[833] Intercourse with her husband would be almost unthinkable for her during these days and there are heavy penalties attached to the showing of the menstrual blood by accident. A girl who allowed a drop of blood to fall on her husband's bed or who washed in the stream where others washed is thought to threaten illness to those near her. I was told she would be punished by her fellows by being made to sit over a fireplace till her flesh was scorched.

At the end of a period the old fire is extinguished; a ritual act of
● [784] intercourse takes place and a new fire lit (*ukusangulula*), the word used for the similar purification performed after a village has been polluted by death.

[1] Cf. my *Land, Labour and Diet in Northern Rhodesia*, 1939, p. 365.

[2] Only the head wife of a polygamist can perform the pot ceremony for him. Hence the legal and ritual difference in status between her and her co-wives.

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A murderer or a lion-killer can also harm a fire by being 'hot'. They have done something fierce and must not eat cooked food without purification. The clue to the solution of a murder case trial during my stay in the country was discovered by a Bemba detective who overheard the statement that on such and such a night, *X* and *Y* did not eat with the other men. 'They were eating their food cold'. In other words they had not yet been purified, and could not come near the common fire and hence could be presumed to be murderers.

It is difficult to exaggerate the strength of these beliefs, or the extent to which they affect daily life. In a village at cooking-time young children are sent here and there to fetch 'new fire' from neighbours who are ritually pure. Women in their periods call their sisters to cook for them. Young married women are seen sitting outside beer parties, and explain 'I have a young baby'. All the medicines have been taken and the protective rites done, but there is always the possibility that an adulterer might touch the fire when he is drunk and the beer might be polluted thereby.

There are other sources of danger. The first intercourse with a girl after her initiation ceremony has been performed is considered to be a perilous act. It is carried out with special ritual precautions and in the case of a chief, it must be undertaken by a special court official, (*kaulu*), who takes the risk on himself. This man must 'eat the chisungu' of the girl before she is taken to the chief. Yet, in spite of this danger, it is this act above all others which initiates the ritual relationship between husband and wife and it is valued on this account, so that a young man can claim damages if his betrothed has been seduced after her initiation ceremony, but before the marriage, for it is said that the chisungu of the girl has been stolen from him in this case.

One of the most fatal acts of all was for a girl to bear a child before she had been initiated or before one of the more abbreviated rites now performed at puberty was carried out. Her child would then be a creature of ill-omen—*na mputulo*—who would bring misfortune on any village in which it lived. The child would be a portent of evil. It would stop rain falling. It would make the granaries empty quickly. It might bring dissension. The father and mother of such a child should therefore be driven out

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months before puberty and forms of partial intercourse are practised before she is fully grown. Yet, in spite of this, intercourse is thought to be dangerous. Moreover, it is the act within the marriage bond that is feared, not the act outside it.

The taboos surrounding marriage may be accounted for superficially in terms of Bemba belief, as I have already tried to show. Since it is through marriage that a man is able to get into touch with his ancestral spirits, the relationship is, for that reason, considered dangerous; dangerous because it is a source of power. Taboos of the Bemba type may exist in other tribes where access to ancestral spirits can only be made after an act of intercourse in legal wedlock followed by purification. Data on this point are not available from other areas at present.

It is difficult to believe that the Bemba associate guilt with sex in marriage, even though they speak of married couples as being hot, or with 'bad things on their bodies', if they have not been purified in the approved way. It is at least possible that sex is only considered shameful in association with a man's ancestors who are, in this society, his maternal uncles and grandfather. In daily life a Bemba behaves with reticence and shyness before his mother's brother since he may one day inherit the latter's wife together with his name, his status and his bow.[1] There may thus be an extension to the spirit world of attitudes to living relatives, which would explain the resolute attempt to keep a 'hot' person away from the spirit shrines.

The taboos may also reflect the anxieties associated with marriage in Bemba society, for it is, after all, a frail link on which to depend for an approach to supernatural power. Margaret Read has pointed out that among the Nyasaland Ngoni, who are patrilineal with strong patrilineages, and who practise marriage by bride-wealth, girls are protected before marriage and the ceremony involves a test of virginity. After marriage there are few, if any, taboos on handling fire. Among the neighbouring Cewa who are,

[1] It is possible that the castration complex takes a different form in matrilineal societies in which a young man succeeds to the role of his maternal uncle and not his father. The reluctance to associate sex with an approach to the ancestors may be connected with it. Malinowski made suggestions along these lines in 1927 in *Sex and Repression in Savage Society* but little serious comparative work has been done on these lines since then, so far as I know.

also have been employed. Household utensils and vessels were fashioned from wood and gourds. Bracelets and other ornaments were manufactured from copper-wire or copper bars purchased from the Nyamwezi who smelted copper in Katanga. The traditional arms were spear, assegai, *pocue* (the short, broad-bladed, two-edged Lunda sword) and battle-axe.(1) A defensive weapon was the square, lightwood shield said to be unpierceable after being soaked in water.(2). Bows and arrows were apparently not used in war.(3)

SOCIAL ORGANIZATION

CLAN ORGANIZATION(4)

The clan (*mukowa*) consists of persons, alive and dead, believed to be descended matrilineally from a common ancestor or ancestress, even though they may not be able to trace their ancestry. The clans, now dispersed, have each a traditional home, *ntulo* (a word also used for the source of a river), a common totemic name (usually the generic name of an animal or plant), and a common slogan, *ilumbo* (from *ukulumba*, to boast). In principle clans are exogamous but in fact this is not observed; the exogamous unit is the *cikota*, a subdivision of the clan. Each clan stands in a joking relationship (*bwali*) to one, or sometimes more than one other, with which its name is connected by an association of ideas. Examples of such paired clans are: the leopard and the goat (because leopards kill goats), the iron and the elephants (elephants were hunted with iron-headed spears), the mushroom and the ant-hill (mushrooms thrive on ant-hills). No preferential marriage obtains between the *bali* (persons in joking relationship) as is the case among the Bemba. In the mortuary ceremonies a special role is assigned to a *mwali* of the deceased. An isolated instance of an inter-clan avoidance pattern is provided by the Lion (*Bena Nkalamo*) and the Snake clans. Members of a clan are supposed to give hospitality to their fellow-clansmen whatever their tribal affiliation.

Clan organisation is believed to be universal and coeval with mankind. No mythical explanation of the origin of clans is offered. Religious or ritual cults are not practised on a clan basis. There is no prohibition against killing or eating the object from which the clan derives its name, nor, on the other hand, is any special veneration required.

The clans are not hierarchically organised though, in fact, some may enjoy greater prestige owing to their numerical strength or connections and others may be regarded as of little consequence, like the derided Pins and Needles clan. The clan to which the Kazembe's mother belongs is, for the duration of his reign, placed in a privileged position.

As a rule the clans have no specialised economic or ritual functions although the intervention of the Fish clan (*Bena Mpende*) is invoked when the water is too low for the salmon to reach their normal spawning grounds. No clan meetings are held.

(1) Valdez, op.cit., p.239.
(2) ibid. (3) Burton, p.43.
(4) Based on information provided by I.G. Cunnison who is at present engaged on an intensive study of the Luapula peoples.

791 The n'anga (magicians) of whose activity little is known, dwelt in a
798 banana grove just south of the capital which no outsiders could enter on pain of death.(1)

782 Human sacrifices were made at the capital.(2) Victims were prisoners
789 of war and, failing them, the Kazembe's own subjects. Human blood, hearts
787 and entrails are mentioned among the ingredients of which medicines were made.(3) Horns containing medicine were supposed to give protection from witchcraft. Before any hazardous enterprise - war, hunting, travel - was
[726] undertaken, an oracle was consulted(4) and, if prospects looked suspicious, a medicine was prepared.(5)

264 The Kazembe was said to receive warnings of hostile machinations in
643 dreams. If he dreamt of someone more than once this was a sign that the
787 man was plotting against him and must be put to death.(6) Crawford was informed that the Kazembe was ritually insulted during his meals, and he describes this in some detail.(7) "The king eats in a mysterious mode called *kapoolo*... The 'old doctors' cursed him while he ate, his face veiled: 'Kazembe should die! He is no man! A beast! Kill the beast, oh! son of Temena (his mother's name)' ". The *ngoolo* was sounded to let people know that Kazembe was having his meal, and no one else was allowed to eat at the same time.

834 Ritual cleansing is prescribed after sexual intercourse. A man who
783 kills a lion has to be washed in *nshipa* medicine by the headman before he can enter the village, and may not eat or speak till this has been done.

226 A wealth of ritual attached to fishing. Ritual authority was vested
789 in the Shila "owners of the land".(8) The ceremony of *ukufungula subi* (unlocking the fish) was performed annually towards the middle of the dry season on all the waters except the Luapula which "belongs to God". Bits of medicine were attached to the nets in order to ensure a good catch and prevent the nets from being torn. Charms were worn by fishermen or suspended at the bows to protect the canoe from being capsized by hippo or
● [784] crocodiles. When the canoe was first launched the women sprinkled it with a little cassava flour to ensure plentiful catches. A woman, particularly when carrying a child, was forbidden to step over a net. Sexual
[834] relations were tabooed when the fish were being poisoned. Lake Mweru was apparently never crossed south of Kilwa island, according to Livingstone.(9) At the "cursing" ceremony on Lake Mweru the dead men drowned in the lake were called by name and reprimanded.(10) Those who came safe ashore after their boats had foundered were greeted with a deliverance song and led in a thanksgiving procession.(11)

(1) Gamitto, I, p.358.
(2) Pereira puts the number of human victims at twenty a day (Livingstone, I, p.265). This is probably no more trustworthy than is his statement that Kazembe's army numbered 200,000 trained soldiers. R.J. Moore discusses human sacrifices as if at the time he wrote (1937) they were still common and an essential part of the salt-making ritual. The victim, according to him, is "nowadays usually a child".
(3) Burton, p.126.
(4) ibid., p.228.
(5) ibid., p.128.
(6) Livingstone, I, p.277.
(7) Crawford, 2, p.104.
(8) Livingstone, op.cit., p.252.
(9) op.cit., p.269.
(10) Crawford, op.cit., p.105.
(11) ibid., pp.105-6.

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in prayer. When a man or woman dies, his or her social personality must be immediately perpetuated by a successor who passes through a special ritual (*ukupyanika*) and thus acquires the name, the symbols of succession (a bow for a man and a girdle for the woman), and the *umupashi* of the dead man. By this social identification, a man assumes the latter's position in the kinship-group, uses the same kinship terms and, in the case of a chief, it is almost impossible to tell when a man is describing incidents which took place in his own life or those of an ancestor two or three generations dead. So important is this social perpetuation of the dead considered that immediately after a death, before the successor has finally been appointed, a small boy or girl, usually a maternal grandchild, is chosen to inherit the name of the deceased temporarily (*ukunwa menshi*, 'to drink the water'). He or she is given some small piece of the latter's property and thereafter addressed as grandfather or grandmother, or whatever the right kinship term may be.

In the same way, a chief, once he has succeeded to the name, the spirit, and the sacred relics of his predecessor, has magic influence over the productive capacity of his whole territory. His ill health or death, his pleasure or displeasure, his blessings or curses, can affect the prosperity of the people, and even his sex life reacts on the state of the community.[1] For a chief to break a sex taboo is an act which may cause calamity to the whole people, and the rites by which he is purified after sexual contacts form one of the most important elements in the politico-religious ceremonial requiring the participation of thirty or forty hereditary officials (*bakabilo*) in the case of the paramount. Conversely, legitimate sex intercourse, especially as prescribed on certain ritual occasions, may actually be a health-giving influence. Any headman has a certain degree of supernatural influence in his own village as the successor to his predecessor's *umupashi*, but a chief has considerably more. For all these reasons, ritual precautions guard the sacred person of a chief. Special taboos must be kept to preserve the ritual purity of the ruler's sacred fire, and his sacred

[1] There are rumours that chiefs were throttled by their hereditary councillors when they were obviously sick unto death, for fear they took 'the land' into the grave with them. This information was sent me by Mr. T. Fox-Pitt after I had left the country and was afterwards checked by Mr. Godfrey Wilson. In fact it is probable that in the old days the Bemba chiefs would fall under Frazer's definition of a 'divine king'.

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food, and to protect his person and that of the sacred relics from the contagion of illness, death, or sex defilement.[1]

The ritual by which a successor to the chieftainship is converted from an ordinary individual to a ruler with almost divine powers, has a good deal of political importance. It confers authority on the priests—in this case hereditary officials (*bakabilo*) who carry it out—and gives them, as we shall see, considerable power to check the chief himself. The complete ritual by which the *umupashi* of a dead ruler is liberated to guard the land he governed, and the new heir is installed, is too complex to describe here and now. Briefly speaking, it consists of the desiccation of the body during a period of a year, from one kafir-corn harvest to the next; its burial in a special grove (with human sacrifices in the old days); and the building of a shrine on the site of the deserted capital. To make the new chief, *bakabilo* must preside at the installation of a new great wife, arrange for the sexual purification of the royal pair, and the lighting of their new sacred fire.[2] They must hand over to the heir the heirlooms (*babenye*) of which they have been in charge during the interregnum, and must finally found a new village and build again the sacred huts in which the relics are to be kept. Such a ceremonial may take eighteen months to two years and the participation of all the *bakabilo* and hereditary buriers (*bafingo*) in the case of the paramount; a lesser time and very many fewer priestly dignitaries in the case of the territorial chiefs. The secrecy and awe surrounding these ceremonies is, I believe, one of the ways by which the people's reverence for their chiefs is maintained.

(*b*) *Legal Rules of Descent and Succession.* Against this background of beliefs as to the continuity between one generation and another, the nature of descent and succession is defined exactly by legal rule. Descent in the royal family is reckoned to the time of first occupation of the country, and twenty-five to thirty Citimukulus are remembered. In the case of a territorial chief, the line of ancestors is not so long, and most are described as having been 'born in the country'. Most of the names honoured are those of men but some are those of women, and it seems that

[1] cf. my *Land, Labour and Diet in Northern Rhodesia* (1939), chap. xvii.

[2] Hence the importance of the great wife of the chief (*umukolo ua calo*) in the political life of the tribe and the belief that her behaviour also influences the welfare of the land.

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differ only in degree. All are said to look after their people, to 'work the land', and, with reference to their supernatural powers, to 'spit blessings over the land' (*ukufunga mate*). Their political duties consist in the administration of their capitals and also of their territories as a whole. A large *umusumba* means plenty of coming and going, enough workers for joint enterprises, a large panel of advisers for court cases, many messengers to keep in touch with the surrounding villages—in short, the possibility of keeping the tribal machine running. To maintain and even augment such a community by his popularity and his reputation for generosity is one of the chief's important political tasks. He has also to keep contact with the people widely dispersed over his *icalo* and to appoint new headmen, amalgamate old villages, and decide as to the selection of heirs to old titles. On his success in these last duties the integration of his people as a political unit largely depends.

As a judicial authority, the chief presides over his court with advisers selected from his village, and in the old days he alone could hear charges of witchcraft and, in the case of the greater territorial chiefs, put the accused to the poison ordeal (*mwafi*). In the economic sphere, he initiates agricultural activities by performing the customary ceremony before each begins; he makes big gardens with the aid of tribute labour from which he is able to fill large granaries and thus find the wherewithal to feed his following; he controls directly certain fishing and hunting enterprises: and he criticizes and directs the gardening work of his own villagers.[1]

The ritual duties of a chief consist in the observation of the taboos for the protection of his own person and the safety of the sacred relics at his disposal, and the carrying out of a number of rites for the sake of his whole *icalo*—in the case of the paramount, for the whole tribe. These last consist of economic rites, tree-cutting, sowing, and first-fruit ceremonies, those performed in case of national calamity, and for success in war in the old days. He was formerly bound to protect the people from witches and used to employ a special doctor at his court to destroy, by burning, the bodies of those found guilty of this offence.

In the old days the chief organized military expeditions,

[1] cf. my *Land, Labour, and Diet in Northern Rhodesia* (1939), chap. xiii, for a full account of the chief's economic powers.

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satisfied native belief, while their ritual contained many superficial features of the white civilization. The witch-finders came as well-dressed young men, not as wrinkled old native doctors (*yanga*) in greasy bark-cloth. They worked in the open and lined up the natives after the manner of an official taking a census. They sold their medicine in stoppered chemist's bottles rather than in dirty old horns pulled from a skin bag. Their teaching, too, was an interesting blend of the old and the new. Their power, they said, came from Lesa, the High God on whom the *yanga* calls when preparing his medicine, the term being used by the missionary also to describe the Christian God. But curiously enough the efficacy of the medicine depended on the keeping of a number of taboos which are deeply embedded in native belief, such as, for instance, the taboo on a man having intercourse with a woman in the bush. Some natives said that Marya also helped the *Bamucapi*, but added quickly not the Marya of the Catholic missions, but another one; for there is no doubt the movement was anti-mission as a whole. Phrases reminiscent of Christian teaching were also used. The witch-finders addressed the villagers with a preliminary sermon, a technique quite foreign to the native *yanga*, and stressed such ideas as the washing of sins. Kamwende, it will be remembered, descended into the grave and rose again, and was expected to reappear at a second coming. It is interesting, too, that the *Bamucapi* followed the distinctions made by the Roman Catholic missions in the classification of native medicines. Those that contained medicine (*muti*) only were permitted, but those that contained what the Babemba call a *cisimba*, an activating principle, such as an eagle's claw or the bone of a squirrel, were to be forbidden.

But over and above the attraction of novelty there were deeper causes behind the success of the *Bamucapi*. The witch-finders claimed, as I stated, to remove the dangerous weapons of the sorcerer. We have to ask ourselves then, whether the fear of witchcraft is one which dominates native belief. Is black magic, in the sense of a definite ritual actually performed by a man in the belief that it will harm his enemy, very constantly performed among the Babemba?

An analysis of the horns collected by the *Bamucapi* throws an interesting light on this question. I took possession in one instance of the complete heap of horns and magic charms, 139 in all, which had been

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789 found in a village of some 70 huts. These lay in a tumbled heap at the cross-roads outside the village, surrounded by knots of people, mostly young men and women, murmuring under their breath at the horrors from which they had been saved. These onlookers seemed to assume to a man that the horns were dangerous objects without exception. Excited comment identified this and that small object as coming from a dead man's grave, as almost certainly part of the bone of a sorcerer's victim, or as soaked in the blood of a dead child.

789 415 The actual analysis of these horns was therefore interesting. The collection included 45 small duiker horns, admitted by most to be used as containers for charms or medicines (*muti*) usually of a harmless type such as hunting magic. Sixteen were the horns of big buck such as roan antelope, the usual containers for medicine good and bad, and even for snuff or any other substance which needs to be carried in a stoppered vessel. It would be difficult, informants admitted, to tell a container of black magic from a simple box of snuff. Of the rest of the charms, 17 were small gourds (*misaʃi*) used as containers for snuff or oil with a wooden stopper fixed in the narrow end. In such tiny gourds, magic of good luck or popularity is often carried (*muti wa cisense*). Thirty-six more charms were the small cloth bags (*mikoba*) in which medicines of various sorts are sewn to be worn round the owner's neck, the *Bamucapi* themselves supplying their medicine in this form. Such medicines would be nearly always protective to the owner and not destructive to somebody else. To cut a long story short then, out of a collection of 135 horns which had drawn cries of horror and execration from the passers-by, 125 were mere containers, possibly filled with nothing more than the ordinary household remedies which the English mother keeps against coughs and digestive ailments.

789 [825] Of the remainder of the horns, some were admittedly doubtful or definitely suspicious. Five were wristlets made of the skin of the water lizard or the tree iguana, which are considered ill-omened animals. Nine were bush-buck horns, and this buck (*cisongo*) has a very bad [784] reputation among the Babemba. The animal is believed to be a *cibanda* or evil spirit, and is tabooed to chiefs, to pregnant women, and 754 others. By such a horn a sorcerer would be able to lay the spirit of his 789 victim, sending it flying through the air by night 'glowing like a white man's torch' (*lulebanga torchi*) to the grave of the recently buried